

109 Rosalind and Richard Gilbert

Please note that any items that were difficult to transcribe are marked with an [indiscernible] tag.

Respondent 1: And then what Eleanor does is she sends the file to me, and I organize all the files, so...

Interviewer: And you've just recorded that. [Laughter] The date today is the 6th of April...

Respondent 1: No, it's 6th of May.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness. Oh my god. Thanks, Richard. [Laughs] 6th of May, 2013. I'm in the home of Rosalind and Richard Gilbert. [0:00:30] And I want to say first, thank you very much for giving me some of your time. I know you moved here in 1971, which gives us a nice long span of time. Before I get into other questions, how old were your children at that time? Did you have children yet?

Respondent 2: We had just our daughter, and she was two was she? Eighteen months?

Respondent 1: Yeah. 1971 she was less than two.

Respondent 2: Less than two. She was born in '69.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: In [0:01:00] June, so she would be...

Respondent 1: Yeah. She was just over eighteen months.

Interviewer: And then you had three more children.

Respondent 2: One more.

Interviewer: One more.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yes.

Respondent 1: And I have two other children.

Interviewer: Okay. Got it. That's why I'm listening – okay.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So the reason I'm asking that is I just want to have some sense of the stage your family was at at that time.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Right.

Interviewer: So you raised two very young children.

Respondent 1: Yes.

Respondent 2: Yes. And then Richard's other two would come and visit.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So that gives me an idea, or I [0:01:30] want to ask some questions about where children played and the schools they went to.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: So that's why I asked that question.

Respondent 1: So we had young kids.

Interviewer: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Respondent 2: And they all played in our back lane.

Interviewer: Okay. So we're going to come to all of that.

- Respondent 2:** Okay.
- Interviewer:** My first question is what prompted you to buy a home and move into this neighbourhood? What was the appeal?
- Respondent 1:** We were living, believe it or not, in Forest Hill [0:02:00] in what was basically a shack.
- Respondent 2:** It was servant's house.
- Respondent 1:** It was a servant's house on Thelma Avenue. Didn't even have central heating.
- Respondent 2:** Didn't have a basement.
- Respondent 1:** Had nothing. And we had – it was affordable. That was its main merit, but it was really – it was on the edge of being habitable, and we needed – we wanted something better, [0:02:30] and this was an appealing area. We...
- Respondent 2:** We were looking in the Annex originally.
- Respondent 1:** We looked in the Annex, but the houses were just a little bit too expensive for us.
- Respondent 2:** If you were going to have to fix them up. So.
- Respondent 1:** So we had a certain amount of money that we could afford, and we couldn't afford the Annex, but we could afford here, so. We wanted to live – we wanted to live quite close to – I was working at the Addiction Research [0:03:00] Foundation, which had just opened the building on Russell Street, and we wanted to live reasonably close there, and we liked living in the downtown, and so...
- Interviewer:** Well if you were thinking of the Annex, you were already wanting to be a little more central than Forest Hill.
- Respondent 1:** We wanted to be closer than Forest Hill. Yeah.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. What was the neighbourhood like at that time? Who was living here? What was the population?
- Respondent 2:** It was very mixed. It was more – I think there was still quite a few **[0:03:30]** Jewish families here. I mean we bought this house from a Jewish family who had lived here – three sisters.
- Respondent 1:** Thirty years or something.
- Respondent 2:** Thirty years. It still had a coal furnace here.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 2:** Like they hadn't done very much to it.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** So there was a mix of the older Jewish families. There was quite a lot of the Italian families, and the newer Portuguese families, and some – our neighbours were from Hong Kong.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. And they had the – that's the family that lives on your block, or they moved to your **[0:04:00]** block. The first house north of Ulster.
- Interviewer:** I should get to meet there.
- Respondent 1:** Sato. S-A-T-O.
- Interviewer:** Okay. I should get to meet them. They'd been here a long time.
- Respondent 1:** I'm not a hundred percent sure they're still there, but...
- Respondent 2:** Their son is a dentist in Kensington Market.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so I should find him.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Right. Right. Yeah.

Respondent 2: Sato.

Interviewer: I'll write this down after.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah. So it was a real mix. There were many more children around than there are now, so there were a lot of family homes and children **[0:04:30]** running around. I think there's less so now.

Respondent 1: Mm-hm. Definitely.

Interviewer: Were the children all speaking English, or were there different languages?

Respondent 1: The children mostly spoke English.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So maybe at home they spoke other languages.

Respondent 1: That's right.

Respondent 2: That's right.

Respondent 1: That's right.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: But there were a mix. The children that our kids played with – Mumvir was Indian.

Respondent 1: Mm-hm.

Respondent 2: And there was a Portuguese guy.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And there was – [0:05:00] what were the other ones?
- Respondent 1:** Can't remember. What you were seeing at this time also was the beginning of something that became stronger, which was an influx of professional people into the area. It had already started.
- Interviewer:** By 1971 it was starting.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. It had already started. Yeah. For example, one person that you have [0:05:30] interviewed, Celia Denov, then lived on Borden and they had – they were already here. And there were some others.
- Respondent 2:** Not many though.
- Respondent 1:** Not so many, no. Another person you've interviewed moved at about that time. Bob Barnett and Anna Barnett.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** So you were seeing the beginning of that. I mean it's right next to the university, and it's appealing for people who [0:06:00] like to walk to work. I mean the university people tended to go to the Annex, but this was a poorer person's Annex.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I've heard it called the "Poor Man's Annex." [Laughter] When people say, "Do you live in the Annex?"
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So when we're talking about the poor man's Annex or whatever, how would describe what this – in a kind of socioeconomic description, how would you describe what this was

at that time? When you moved here, what did your friends think?
That you were moving to what?

Respondent 1: [0:06:30] It was just the beginning of – we have quite a few friends who lived in – we had friends, maybe not quite a few, who lived in Cabbagetown. And Cabbagetown was just beginning to be gentrified, and so there was a sense that yes, the area was poor and basically working class, but maybe [0:07:00] it had a different future.

Respondent 2: We described this area as an immigrant catchment area, and we were immigrants and...

Respondent 1: We were immigrants. Yeah.

Respondent 2: And that seemed to be a good place for us to be. I think that we had a lot of university friends at that time, or people at the Addiction Research Foundation.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: There, they didn't kind of look at Toronto as, you know, whether you lived in Rosedale or the Annex. [0:07:30] It was more, you know, just, "Did you have a nice house that you could live in?"

Respondent 1: I just thought of another person you could interview actually who is Martha Shuttleworth.

Respondent 2: Shuttleworth.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Who now lives on Albany.

Respondent 2: Oh right. But she used to live on...

Respondent 1: She used to live on Borden. And they were here at about that time. She and her then-husband.

Respondent 2: Tony Coombes.

Respondent 1: Tony Coombes, yeah.

- Respondent 2:** You could interview as well. He's a planner.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. I'll put you in touch with him.
- Interviewer:** Good.
- Respondent 1:** I'm not sure where Tony lives now, [0:08:00] but I know how to contact him. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So that's two interviews I'll get from that maybe.
- Respondent 1:** Well yes.
- Respondent 2:** They split up, so.
- Respondent 1:** They split up, but they're still – they still work together, so they're still friends. But yeah. That might be interesting. They lived at the house at the northeast corner of Lennox and Borden.
- Interviewer:** Good. Okay. I'll put them on my list after. Rosalind, a few minutes ago you mentioned something about where the children played.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Let's move back [0:08:30] to that. So where – what were some of the favourite areas where the children played as they were growing up?
- Respondent 2:** Well basically they played in the back lane, and our garden, you know, had a gate open to the back lane, and we had grass and a tree with a swing. And so a lot of the kids were from Brunswick and they came out to the backyard. And they all kind of just milled around, and very up and down the lane. I think sometimes they went – when they're older they would go up [0:09:00] to the park.
- Respondent 1:** The Margaret Fairley.
- Respondent 2:** Margaret Fairley park.

Interviewer: Was the lane paved at the time?

Respondent 1: Yes.

Interviewer: It was.

Respondent 2: Yeah. But it was pretty...

Respondent 1: Pretty bad.

Respondent 2: ...pretty bad.

Respondent 1: I mean it still is pretty bad.

Respondent 2: Right.

Respondent 1: It was paved. Yeah.

Interviewer: And what did they play in the back lane?

Respondent 2: What did they play?

Respondent 1: Yeah. What were the games?

Respondent 2: At one time they played kind of bows and arrows because Emily got an arrow in her back and I had to take her to...

Respondent 1: To the Doctors Hospital.

Respondent 2: ...the Doctors Hospital.

Interviewer: Oh god.

Respondent 2: But they played on the swing, they played...

Respondent 1: We had a big swing in [0:09:30] our backyard.

Respondent 2: Mm-hm.

- Respondent 1:** We had a huge tree, which we had to pull down because it became infested. But it was also...
- Respondent 2:** We also had a sandpit there too.
- Respondent 1:** Monstrous tree and a sandpit. So our backyard was, as Rosalind said, we had this easily openable gate onto the lane, so our backyard was a bit of a gathering place. But backyard – it wasn't the people came to play in our backyard. It was just because it was easily accessible from the lane.
- Respondent 2:** They weren't really playing [0:10:00] with toys as much.
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Respondent 2:** You know? Bits of rope or...
- Respondent 1:** Just fooling around.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Just...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...chatting and...
- Respondent 1:** But the lane was a fairly safe place. It was seen as a fairly safe place. And the – I mean there were cars in the lane, but they were outnumbered by the children, you know? There were really quite a few children playing around.
- Interviewer:** Well, and fewer cars than on the street I would think.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** Kids were...
- Respondent 1:** And there still are. But now [0:10:30] it's more a car-dominated place. You don't get kids playing in the lane. And I'm not sure when that stopped.

- Respondent 2:** Because there's lots of cars now parked. You know, go up and down in the lane.
- Interviewer:** But that was a good spot for the kids.
- Respondent 2:** It was a great spot. I mean, and our kids went to school out of the area, so these were the local kids that they...
- Interviewer:** So that was a nice way for them to meet the local kids.
- Respondent 2:** Right.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Because they didn't go to school with them.
- Respondent 2:** Right.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And obviously their school friends came over sometimes, but...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. **[0:11:00]** And what about the front? Front porches, front sidewalks. Did you use those? Did you or the neighbours use those in any ways?
- Respondent 1:** We tended not to, but I do remember kids playing to a degree on the sidewalk in the street, but not much. I mean the lane was more of a focus. But there were just a lot more kids around, and the porches were – the porches are still used, **[0:11:30]** but they were used more as sitting-out places.
- Respondent 2:** Adults would sit out.
- Respondent 1:** Adults sitting out, with kids spilling around.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** You know?

- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I mean our neighbours, Freddy, next door. They used to always be out on the porch.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. They were out on their porch.
- Respondent 2:** There were a lot of older people sitting on their porches and with younger kids who weren't allowed to go off and play.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** So the – I was just thinking of something. Back of my mind. Come back.
- Interviewer:** **[0:12:00]** How was the community divided in terms of how much was family and how much were boarding homes, or students, or another family on the second floor, another on the third? Are you aware of that at all?
- Respondent 1:** Just to go about the question of students, interestingly enough, the students back in the early '70s were not a big feature of this neighbourhood. They began to be a feature in the '80s and particularly in the '90s, but **[0:12:30]** if they were – and now they're visible, and in illegal rooming houses, and you know, taking over properties. That didn't really occur then and I don't know why. I don't know what the dynamics of that were. So on the question of students, back in the early '70s, they weren't evidently a factor like they are now.
- Interviewer:** Pouring out onto the streets with their parties.
- Respondent 1:** Whatever. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Right. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** But **[0:13:00]** exactly what was going on in some of the houses? For instance, this house, it was owned by the same family for roughly thirty years. A bit more than thirty. Thirty-eight years, I think, actually, before we bought it from them. But it was actually loosely divided into two, with the kitchen upstairs, but not a separate front door. **[0:13:30]** So...

- Respondent 2:** But it was three sisters that lived here.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. So how they organized themselves there, and the parents were right in the 1920s. The parents were here, but how – what actually went on in some of these – in the houses was unclear. It would have been unclear to people outside this family that this house was actually divided into two inside. And [0:14:00], and even though we came across this, we couldn't figure out how it worked.
- Interviewer:** But this one had a second kitchen.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. But it only had one bathroom.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. But it's not uncommon.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I've been hearing eight to twelve people with one bathroom, but sometimes they did have a second kitchen.
- Respondent 1:** Separate kitchen. Yeah. [Laughter] Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Wow.
- Respondent 1:** So how they worked, we don't know.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But it sounds if they were working in two separate – [0:14:30] in some of them...
- Respondent 1:** Partially. Partially.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. But as I say, only one bathroom. [Laughs]

Respondent 2: I'm just going to go back to the kids. I know that – I remember, it made me think of this picture of Emily dressed up as a daffodil where they did more – there were more activities for the kids, so when there was something on at the park, like now it seems to be more kind of bake sales, and book sales, and things like that. Well it used to be more kid-oriented activities, so they would have this – there was a big [0:15:00] dress-up thing for competition, and...

Interviewer: At the park right here.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: But at the Margaret Fairley park. So you know the annual fair that Gus organizes there?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yes.

Respondent 1: Well that was actually going on forty-odd years ago, and equivalent, but much more kid-oriented. So if you go to that fair now, it's really adult-orientated. It's really, you know, the [0:15:30] silent auction, and the beer, and the kids – there are kids there. But in those days, the equivalent of that – of course, Gus wasn't around, but it was done.

Respondent 2: Celia organized it.

Respondent 1: Celia organized it for a couple of years. Yeah.

Interviewer: Well, I guess the young families would have to organize something for young families with children.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: And those days, the park – I mean one of the other things is the park was new. It'd been in less than ten years. [0:16:00] And it became shabby, and shabby, and shabby, and shabbier, and now it's being renovated, of course, but it was quite nice then. [Laughs] The park.

Interviewer: And I think the families still use it.

Respondent 1: Oh yes.

Interviewer: You know, I pass this park constantly, and I see the equipment and I see slow changes. Like when I came today, or yesterday Paul and I went for a walk. No. Anyway, what I'm saying is they're not working hard to move quickly. There are a lot of times [0:16:30] during the week when I see the equipment there...

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...and the fence around it, and nobody's working in there.

Respondent 1: Yeah. I don't know what's happening, but they're supposed to – the revitalized park is supposed to open in July.

Interviewer: Well I hope so.

Respondent 1: So they've got to get a move on. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent 2: That's annoying.

Interviewer: I'm going to move onto the roads and traffic.

Respondent 2: Mm-hm.

Interviewer: Now Richard, you made a major contribution, so please talk about that.

Respondent 1: Well, when [0:17:00] – one of the very first things that was evident when we moved in was the speeding traffic. It really was a big issue because the roads were just continuous north-south all the way from College up to Bloor. I mean you had to cross, you know, Harbord in particular, and so on, but certainly between College and Harbord, and in between Harbord [0:17:30] and Bloor, and the other way on the reverse streets, you could go quite fast. And there weren't that many accidents, but there were just a lot of scary things.

Respondent 2: There was an accident right outside our house.

Respondent 1: Yes, there were.

Respondent 2: A little girl ran off in between two parked cars and...

Respondent 1: Yeah. There were accidents. I'm just saying there weren't...

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Fewer than you might think, but...

Interviewer: But the cars were moving quickly.

Respondent 1: So [0:18:00] there were basically – the first consideration was to say, "Let's go back to the two-way street system that prevailed up until the 1940s." So if you look at the old photos of these streets, you will see that every street was a two-way street, and there weren't so many parked cars. There were some, and so on. I mean there just weren't so many vehicles around. [0:18:30] And you can certainly have two-way streets that are as narrow as this. I mean our daughter lives on 1 Kendall, which is a two-way street, and it's no wider than this. But the city wouldn't even think about going back to two-way streets. And a couple of streets are two-way, like Vankoughnet is two-way, but in terms of the general things, they just rejected it out of hand. They wouldn't even think about it, so it wasn't, you know, an option. So [0:19:00] I then – working with a few other people, said, "Well, the city insists that we've got to have mainly one-way streets. How can we stop people going through?" And it's logical. You just change the direction of the streets. But apparently we hit on – this was the first – certainly the first one in Canada, probably the first one in North America, and maybe the first one in the world, we don't know, but it became quite well known. [0:19:30] But this was initially mooted by the Residents' Association in 1972 or 1973. I can't remember exactly the year. Probably '72. And it took twenty years to become implemented. It took almost ten years to become implemented north of Harbord. [0:20:00] And then this area south of Harbord, it took roughly another ten years, so it wasn't until maybe not as much as ten

years, but certainly the late '80s, 1980s, that it was implemented here. And...

Respondent 2: Really? As late as that?

Respondent 1: Yeah. Yeah. It was implemented – I can't remember.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: It would be easy to look this up, [0:20:30] but I just can't remember – because I set this thing in motion, but then I stopped being involved in the area, so it was really other people that picked it up, and there were huge public meetings about it. And there were polls and so on, and the first poll barely accepted in the north and didn't – rejected it in the south. There was a lot of opposition. A lot of opposition to it. People would say – I went to one of the meetings. [0:21:00] There were several meetings, but I only went to one of them. People were saying, "I have a God-given – this is my street. I pay for this street. I have a right to drive from Bloor Street down to my house," you know, where I – I mean the system had only been in for about twenty years. It was two-way before that, but anyway. So there was a lot of opposition. Now, if you want to know more about that, probably Bob Barnett [0:21:30] is the person who can tell you more about the gap, you know, what I don't know there.

Interviewer: But that's so interesting. You know? It shows that we shouldn't make assumptions because my assumption would be, "Thank you," especially since there were so many families with young children.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: And even those people said, "You're getting in the way and you're going to slow me down, and don't do it."

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: When it was introduced, people liked it. It was not – [0:22:00] it was before...

- Respondent 2:** The thought of it.
- Respondent 1:** ...the thought of it, of changing things.
- Respondent 2:** Mind you, people visiting our house didn't like it.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Giving directions...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** They'd say – oh, traffic mazes.
- Respondent 1:** I mean cab drivers are now used to it, but for years, cab drivers...
- Respondent 2:** Even a cab would say, "I don't know what happened to this neighbourhood." [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** I know that when I give people directions, I tell them where they'd go and say, "Get onto Harbord and go south when you get to Borden," because [0:22:30] otherwise they arrive and they're angry at me. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** But the people who live here, I mean I don't know if you've encountered any opposition now, but I found that people who live here like it now. But certainly when it was...
- Interviewer:** Except for the jerks who go the wrong way on our streets. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. And that happens.

Respondent 2: Do you still have that?

Interviewer: Occasionally, but I lived on Robert Street south of Harbord and we had it a lot there, and we would [0:23:00] always yell at them. Of course they would [laughs] – they weren't interested in what we had to say.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: But it used to happen on Robert a lot.

Respondent 2: Mm.

Respondent 1: Mm-hm.

Interviewer: But we do. I appreciate it, and I don't have little kids running around. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: What about public transportation? Have there been changes there that you're aware of from '71 until now?

Respondent 1: The biggest change that affected us was that when we moved here, there was no stop at Borden for the streetcar.

Respondent 2: Yes.

Respondent 1: And Celia was the main [0:23:30] person who got that in.

Interviewer: Boy, you guys really – when you take something on it's very convenient for us.

Respondent 2: Very good idea.

Interviewer: Really?

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. So I mean, I was involved a little bit. It was mainly Celia, so we now have a stop. Like it's been there for years and years, but we have a stop at Borden.
- Interviewer:** Well as long as I've been on Borden I've had that stop. It is very convenient.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** I think the traffic has – I mean travelling by streetcar is much **[0:24:00]** more crowded than it used to be. I mean it used to be quite pleasant. I mean I would have to take Jake as a baby to go and meet – Emily was at a different school, Sacré Coeur, to start with before she went to Gabrielle Roy, so I'd wake up Jake and take him in the streetcar along to Carlton and walk up to the school. It was just past Carlton and...
- Respondent 1:** On Sherbourne. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** On Sherbourne.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And it was very pleasant. I – you know, taking a kid on a streetcar now, I would **[0:24:30]** imagine it's...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...horrific. Even coming back from the Y this morning, and that was at half-past nine, I was coming back. The streetcar was full. Some people couldn't get on.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** It's utterly ridiculous. And that's at nine-thirty in the morning. It's not at a peak hour.
- Respondent 1:** The big difference on the College streetcar is that they used to have about twice as many streetcars.

- Interviewer:** So they don't have as many. Enough. They don't have enough.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. No. I mean...
- Respondent 2:** And there's more people using them.
- Respondent 1:** It used to be a relatively frequent [0:25:00] service, and you know, you could go down to College and there would be a streetcar more or less. I mean not in the middle of the night, but during the day you would see, you know – not true now.
- Interviewer:** I know sometimes as I'm walking to take the streetcar and I see three – somewhere around your house and I see three passing and I know, "Now I'm going to have to wait."
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But three in a row, and then I'm going to have this long wait.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** If you have a [0:25:30] Smartphone, I can show you a brilliant app that tells you exactly when the next streetcar is coming.
- Interviewer:** Good. Good. [Laughter] I guess we're lucky to live here and not in the suburbs, or we'd still have much more access and many more routes happening close to us.
- Respondent 2:** Well I don't think many people have cars in this area. I think they really...
- Respondent 1:** Well I know the numbers. I know the numbers. When we moved here, there was more than one car per household on average.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** And it [0:26:00] gradually declined, and in the 1980s it went below one car per household, and it's declined. There's a survey that's done every five years by not just the city, but cities involved. And the car ownership is going down, and each year – each five years,

and so – and you see it on the street. It's very easy to [0:26:30] get a parking place here at night now. You can go out at eleven o'clock at night and maybe not on a Saturday or Sunday, but Friday or Saturday, you will see spaces on the street unused. And that didn't happen.

Interviewer: So people are using their legs, and TTC, and their bikes...

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...and...

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Any comments about churches or synagogues in this neighbourhood that you're aware of [0:27:00] that have changed through the years?

Respondent 1: Immediately behind this house at number 20 Brunswick, there was a synagogue. The house was – not the whole house. The first floor was a synagogue, and I don't know what went on there, but it was a synagogue maybe for the first twenty years we were here. And then it was bought by the current owners and converted it into [0:27:30] apartments, but...

Respondent 2: At St. Stephens when we – my mother, when she stayed with us, went over to St. Stephen's, and it's kind of changed from being more right-Anglicans to...

Respondent 1: Korean.

Respondent 2: Well no. First it was a lot of Jamaicans.

Respondent 1: Yeah. That's right.

Respondent 2: Anglican Jamaicans who came up, so then the church was kind of half-mixed, half-white and half-black. And now I think it's even more mixed, but because my mother's not [0:28:00] here, I don't get

feedback on what was happening. But it used to have quite a healthy congregation, but it's got smaller and smaller.

Interviewer: Is that the church on College?

Respondent 2: Yes.

Respondent 1: No.

Interviewer: No.

Respondent 1: Not the German church, but the big church at the end of Brunswick.

Interviewer: Yes, that's the one that I mean.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Lovely old building.

Respondent 1: Sorry. You were pointing that way. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Oh, I don't know where I – I'm disoriented. [Laughs] Yeah, yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah. There is that other – that German church on College Street.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: And you have interviewed somebody in connection with that, right?

Respondent 2: Then there's that other **[0:28:30]** little church that I was always interested in, was on Robert or Major.

Respondent 1: Robert.

Respondent 2: Robert.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: On Bloor you mean?

- Respondent 2:** No, Robert. Just when you come up Robert, about the third house up on the...
- Respondent 1:** On the west side.
- Respondent 2:** ...west side, there's a little kind of church been there for ages.
- Respondent 1:** I don't know if it's a church...
- Respondent 2:** Anymore?
- Respondent 1:** Is it? I don't know. I don't know.
- Respondent 2:** They used to have kind of rummage sales and things.
- Respondent 1:** Mm.
- Interviewer:** Well there's a very active one on Bloor near Robert Street, and that is like a community centre. They have...
- Respondent 2:** [0:29:00] Right.
- Interviewer:** ...huge...
- Respondent 1:** You're talking about St. Paul's?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Great programs.
- Respondent 1:** And then there's the synagogue on Brunswick, the Narayever. And are you associated with that?
- Interviewer:** No, but my son and daughter-in-law are, and that's where my grandson had his bar mitzvah. The one who's going to go to school with your grandson in September.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.

- Interviewer:** My grandson is switching to King Eddie.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, is that right?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** One of Eleanor's grandsons is exactly the same age as Josh.
- Respondent 2:** Oh wow.
- Respondent 1:** Like within a – when's his birthday?
- Interviewer:** March. End of March.
- Respondent 1:** Josh was earlier in March.
- Respondent 2:** [0:29:30] Yeah, yeah. [Laughter] So where's he transferring from?
- Interviewer:** He's been at the JCC. They have a day school at the JCC, and he's – so he'll do grade eight at King Eddie and I don't know where he'll go after that.
- Respondent 2:** Right.
- Interviewer:** But he's going knowing nobody, and...
- Respondent 1:** Well I've met him. He's a nice kid, and we should introduce him to Josh. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** We could do that.
- Respondent 1:** Josh is in – no, he gets back today. Josh is at Amsterdam at the moment.
- Respondent 2:** He's part of a soccer group that went to Amsterdam for a week.
- Interviewer:** [0:30:00] And he's also a runner.
- Respondent 1:** He's a runner.

- Interviewer:** He's athletic. Very athletic.
- Respondent 1:** He is. Yeah. He's a star. He's a good soccer player, and he's a star runner. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** And he's tall too for his age.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, he's pretty big. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And sweet, because he dropped something off...
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. He dropped something off for you. Right.
- Interviewer:** So I met him.
- Respondent 1:** Right, right. He and his girlfriend. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And his girlfriend. I know I met both of them. [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Anna.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** She's very young, but he's hanging on with Anna for about six months or more.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** [0:30:30] Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well I met them when they dropped something – and they're both really very sweet young people.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.

- Interviewer:** Can we talk about how you've heated your homes beginning in '71 right through the years? What changes have you made? And what changes are you aware of generally in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent 1:** I could tell you...
- Respondent 2:** You can talk about the heating.
- Respondent 1:** ...yeah, I'll have to tell you about the heating. When we moved into the house, as Rosalind said, the old coal furnace was here with a huge amount of coal [0:31:00] still in the basement, although it was not actually fired by coal. It was fired by oil. So what they had done is taken the old coal furnace and just put an oil attachment to it. It was very – and there was a big oil tank right at the front of what is now the basement. And quite soon, we cleaned that out and converted it, but still the same furnace to gas, to [0:31:30] natural gas. And then – and we kept that for quite some time. Not as long as twenty years, but maybe fifteen years – I can't remember exactly – as a natural gas fired originally coal furnace, and then in the '80s sometime, we put in one of the very first high- [0:32:00] efficiency gas furnaces. And it was a lemon. As Rosalind quipped, the main way we saved gas was that we would be going for weeks without heat. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** In the winter. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** One time...
- Respondent 2:** So we saved a fair bit of money. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** One time in absolute – the coldest part of the year. Like December, January, I can't remember exactly when it was, we were [0:32:30] three weeks without heat, living with wood fire and electric heaters, and leaving the gas oven on.
- Interviewer:** So their service was not very good either.
- Respondent 1:** The service wasn't good.
- Interviewer:** You had a lemon and bad service.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Bad combination.

Respondent 1: And we've changed that furnace, and we now have one that actually is pretty reliable and it's another gas furnace. If you explore – so we have a hot water system, but that's not the **[0:33:00]** original system. When you are exploring behind the walls, you come across an original hot air system, which was what the house was built with. And I think this was put in, but I'm not sure, about 1905. This...

Interviewer: So it's not too new. [Laughs]

Respondent 1: It's not very new, and it's occasionally problematic. We've had a problem there. **[0:33:30]** And we have – not the room above here, but the room over, we've got a rad we can't use. If we turn it on it leaks. [Laughs] It has to be fixed. But I can't remember why I think this is 1905. Maybe the date is stamped on one of the radiators or something. I can't remember. So that was obviously done, and the floor **[0:34:00]** must have been put in since then because – well maybe not.

Respondent 2: No. I don't think so.

Respondent 1: Yeah. But that may have been one of the vents for – you see that – where it's a little bit different?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah. It might have been one of the vents for a hot air system. But you can still find traces in the walls. The other thing is that the house was originally lit by gas.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Respondent 1: **[0:34:30]** And you can still find traces in the walls of the gas-lighting system.

- Interviewer:** Oh. But that wouldn't have been all these homes. I mean if they were built around 1885 or something.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. This house took a long time. These houses, this row of houses was built between 1885 and 1888. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So they wouldn't have all had gas, would they? I don't know.
- Respondent 2:** I don't know.
- Respondent 1:** You can see it. Even if you go inside that – above there, there's a **[0:35:00]** gas fitting about there.
- Respondent 2:** Well do you think all the houses would have had gas-lighting?
- Respondent 1:** Well I know that some of them had.
- Respondent 2:** They were probably – I'm sure, because these old sisters had just been here for ages. They...
- Respondent 1:** Mm. Well there was – I mean when we moved in, they had electric.
- Respondent 2:** It was interesting, but...
- Respondent 1:** But you could – no. I'm saying what you can find in the walls.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** I was talking to Nicole about this, and she has gas. Her house is older, but she lives in the house just north of the synagogue.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** And that house is actually older than **[0:35:30]** ours, and they have – or at least the original part of the house, they have gas fittings around as well. In fact, they're using one of their gas fittings to support one of their lamps. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Yeah. My house was built in 1881.

- Respondent 1:** Yours is older.
- Interviewer:** 1881, but I have no idea whether it was ever...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. I mean you see most of these things in the basement, but if you go – when I was putting this fitting in, you can see the gas arrangement [0:36:00] in there, and...
- Interviewer:** What changes had been done to this house by previous owners or by you?
- Respondent 2:** Pretty much by the previous ones. We knocked down – there was a servant's stairway going up in the kitchen.
- Interviewer:** Oh really?
- Respondent 2:** But we took out [laughter] – so to make the kitchen bigger.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** And we made an extra...
- Respondent 1:** It actually didn't go all the way up to the second floor. It was blocked off. It didn't – you couldn't – [0:36:30] yeah. You couldn't – the floor of that room, which was then a kitchen, had been extended over.
- Respondent 2:** Right. So we made the kitchen into your study at that point, and the bathroom was next to it...
- Respondent 1:** Right.
- Respondent 2:** And since then, that bathroom became a laundry room, and the study became a bigger bathroom.
- Interviewer:** So you've made some changes.

- Respondent 1:** Not very many. I mean...
- Respondent 2:** No, we've added another bathroom out the back here.
- Respondent 1:** That was a few years ago. I mean the only thing we've really done on [0:37:00] this floor – there were two stairways. There was one down to the basement, which was an active – it was the only way down to the basement from this room, and then there was a stairway up to the thing above, which had been covered over at the top. We took both of those out and relocated the stairway down to the basement underneath the other stairs there. And we put in this hatch because it's not – it's really just to provide, you know...
- Respondent 2:** Because when the kids were small, and you could just see them going...
- Interviewer:** [0:37:30] Ah.
- Respondent 1:** And then...
- Respondent 2:** But we took out the fire. The fire was kind of a weird...
- Respondent 1:** Was the fireplace here?
- Interviewer:** A fireplace.
- Respondent 2:** No, the fireplace was through there.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. Yeah, no...
- Respondent 2:** Before we put – it was that big kind of brick thing. We pulled it out. It was just – soot came rolling out all over the floor.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And we made – actually literally made that fireplace.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. So we made that fireplace. And then we – so we did – moved around with making the kitchen and opening the bathroom – taking out the kitchen, making a bigger bathroom upstairs.

Respondent 1: One of the big changes, we opened up [0:38:00] the third floor.

Interviewer: Oh, so that was not open at all.

Respondent 1: It wasn't open to a deck, no.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent 1: So we made a deck out there. Quite a nice deck, or it has been quite a nice deck. It's getting slightly rundown now. And we were the first to put a deck out there, and now almost all the houses – but we had a deck out there in the '70s.

Interviewer: But you had a third – like my house has no third floor, unless we would open it up. So you had a third floor.

Respondent 1: We [0:38:30] had one...

Respondent 2: It was like an attic. It was really...

Interviewer: I'm glad you did.

Respondent 2: They used it for storing, but now we use it as our bedroom with a walkout.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So you live up on the top floor with this walkout. Oh, sounds very nice. Yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah. It's pretty good. And I mean it's quite an awkward stairway to get up to the third floor. It's a narrow, curving stairway.

Respondent 2: But we haven't – when we dug out the basement, but [0:39:30] not big enough to have a really – have an apartment there, so we both got a study down there and Richard's fixing up the back to have an exercise room.

Respondent 1: Yeah. But this is all – what you see...

- Respondent 2:** Now the moldings are...
- Respondent 1:** ...everything is the original stuff. One of the changes we made was the – what do you call the mezuzahs?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** On every wall. Every doorway.
- Interviewer:** Oh, every entrance.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Every other doorway had a mezuzah.
- Interviewer:** So the sisters were Jewish. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** That's right. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** **[0:39:30]** They came and they wanted them back, so they came and said, "Could we keep them."
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** We gave them to them.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well I just learned a few years ago that if, say, I move out of a home, if a Jewish family's moving in, if I'm doing it the right way, I should leave those for the next family. But since you're not Jewish, it was okay to come and take them away.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. It's something I didn't know before.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you didn't lose any sleep over giving them back. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** No, no, no.

- Respondent 1:** [0:40:00] The – yeah. There was a glass door there and we relocated it to the back there, but otherwise this floor is pretty much unchanged.
- Interviewer:** But you've kept the molding and you've kept the character.
- Respondent 1:** We have kept it.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** I mean we painted the ceiling gold rather than whatever it was.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's the original.
- Respondent 1:** That's the original ceiling.
- Respondent 2:** Original ceiling, but we gold-painted it.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** It's dramatic.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. It's...
- Interviewer:** It is. It's very nice.
- Respondent 1:** We haven't really [0:40:30] done very much.
- Interviewer:** Can we move to talk about the commercial part of this part of the city? What I've been finding is when I interview people who live near Harbord, or College, or Bloor, that's the area that they really knew. Sometimes it's the only area they knew at all. But I'm wondering whether you can talk about the commercial part of this. This and the streets going northwest, east, north, [0:41:00] south, east, west.
- Respondent 2:** We had a great variety of stores when we moved here. We've had green grocers on the corner, which was very handy because we didn't have a car, and so they would deliver things. And Mario's

sold everything like – it was an Italian store, and so they had butchers, they had lots of dried goods, and you know, pretty well everything, so that was pretty good. There was a funny little...

Respondent 1: That's where the pizza place is now.

Respondent 2: Right. And there was also a [0:41:30] little Estonian bakery next to there that they sold all these little sausage roll things, and delicacies, and rum balls. And there was another one on the...

Respondent 1: Hungarian.

Respondent 2: ...a Hungarian bakery on the other corner.

Interviewer: So this is all on College.

Respondent 1: Yeah, all on College.

Respondent 2: This was on College and Borden on one side, and on the other side was a green grocer's.

Respondent 1: And then there was – just a bit further along, there was the variety store, Wilco's, where the kids used to live. Yeah.

Respondent 2: [0:42:00] Well Wilco's was along...

Respondent 1: Along that – yeah, towards...

Respondent 2: ...that way. That was a variety store. There was another variety store along the other way that was a family-run variety store. They were very friendly. And they also had movie theatres. We had Cinema Lumiere in – which was a French kind of art cinema that was...

Respondent 1: That was between Robert and – where the hardware store is now. Yeah.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

- Respondent 2:** So that was a great movie theatre. And then there was another movie theatre on this block.
- Respondent 1:** **[0:42:30]** Was it this block? There was one on – there was also one on the block that was...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** One on the block that was pulled down. The block between Brunswick and Major was completely redeveloped. I think that the movie theatre was there, wasn't it? Was it?
- Respondent 2:** I can't remember now if there was another two as well as the Lumiere.
- Respondent 1:** Maybe two more. Maybe one. There were...
- Respondent 2:** But there was certainly one large one apart from Cinema Lumiere that just showed old kind of movies. The kids could go there.
- Interviewer:** What a loss, I would think.
- Respondent 1:** **[0:43:00]** And in the middle of this was the bizarre thing, and that is that where – on Brunswick on the northwest corner, there was a Harvey's. [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Respondent 1:** In the middle of all of this, and one of the first Harvey's was there. [Laughs] And you know, not a big problem. Less of a problem than what's-his-name. Caplansky's now.
- Respondent 2:** Mm.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So that **[0:43:30]** grocery, did everybody get to know – did the owners of that get to know the neighbours and the neighbours got to know that person, first name?

- Respondent 1:** Mario's was a nice institution.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** The other thing...
- Respondent 2:** It was. And his sons all helped in there, and they knew – and there were more Italians in the area.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But everybody shopped there.
- Interviewer:** That becomes part of the fabric of the neighbourhood to have that kind of store, and they delivered for you.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. I mean, they would just push stuff up the...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** The other [0:44:00] bit of a fixture in the neighbourhood that was for years and years, where there is that parkette, that rather contentious parkette on Brunswick on the northeast corner, there was a guy called Giuseppe Ciantani. No, no. Not Ciantani. What was his – that's somebody else. The guy who ran the – had all the plants and flowers, and...
- Respondent 2:** Oh, Micelli.
- Respondent 1:** Micelli. Micelli. Micelli. For years, and years, and years he would set up for the whole summer. He [0:44:30] would take over that corner and just set up there. And...
- Interviewer:** He just moved. He camped out there?
- Respondent 1:** He camped out there. Yes. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** He drank and sold plants.

Respondent 1: Yes. And then he moved. And then the parkette was redeveloped and he moved up to...

Respondent 2: This bush was one he gave me for free one day.

Interviewer: This?

Respondent 2: Yes.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Well it's grown a lot, obviously.

Respondent 2: Well it has all these pink blossoms in it. It's very, very nice.

Interviewer: I just watched a squirrel run up and down it. [Laughs] Like two minutes ago.

Respondent 1: And then he moved up to Caledonia Road, and I think he's left Caledonia.

Respondent 2: [0:45:00] Yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah. And then he moved into wine-selling, which he was an expert at that. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Were there some other interesting characters that you can recall? He was clearly one of them.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Any other characters that you remember?

Respondent 1: Some of the things haven't changed. Mars was here then.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: I think Mars is fading away now.

- Respondent 2:** The Woolco's were characters. They knew everybody.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** That was that little...
- Respondent 1:** That was a variety store on there.
- Respondent 2:** It was a variety store.
- Respondent 1:** They were not entirely pleasant people, [0:45:30] but...
- Respondent 2:** The Marios. They...
- Respondent 1:** You've mentioned the – you've mentioned the delicatessen on this block. Was one or two away from Harbord. Wasn't there a bakery there as...
- Respondent 2:** Well there was a bakery on that corner, remember?
- Respondent 1:** There was a bakery. The Hungarian bakery there.
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** But wasn't there a bigger bakery called – not Quality?
- Respondent 2:** Quality Bakery.
- Respondent 1:** It was Quality Bakery.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, it was Quality [0:46:00] Bakery. You're right.
- Respondent 1:** There was also a delicatessen separate from the bakery. There was – when you said the Estonian, did you mean the delicatessen?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** But it was Estonian, wasn't it?

- Respondent 1:** I don't – something like that. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** It was a very small...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Very small. Yeah, yeah. But that wasn't the Quality Bakery.
- Respondent 2:** No, no.
- Respondent 1:** The Quality Bakery was quite large.
- Interviewer:** So there was a variety of different ethnic small stores.
- Respondent 2:** It was fantastic, and now we have computer stores and hospital, and I – you know.
- Respondent 1:** [0:46:30] Yeah. And...
- Respondent 2:** It's sad that they've all kind of...
- Respondent 1:** I mean fortunately the Market is not far away, but in those days, you didn't even really need to go down to the Market because there was so much on College. Just here.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Did you use the Market at all? And if yes, how?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, we did. We used to go – and I used to go and get a chicken in the Market.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Did you choose your chicken, or was it already dead? [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** No, they – yeah. I used to [0:47:00] choose a chicken, and then he would go and, you know...
- Respondent 1:** He'd kill it.

Respondent 2: ...kill it in the back. I wouldn't – I knew I wouldn't kill it and pluck it, but some – yeah. He was a character actually, the guy that ran the chicken shop.

Respondent 1: But there were a couple of chicken shops actually.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: But the chickens were alive, because at some point they're all dead, but...

Respondent 2: Yeah. They were alive outside in crates as well as inside the store.

Respondent 1: I used to go and look at the chickens, and if one gave you the evil eye, that was the one. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: And people carried them home alive. They carried them home.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah. People would kill [0:47:30] them themselves. I mean, we didn't.

Respondent 2: To get really fresh chickens. So you'd see them in their baskets with the chicken's head popping out.

Interviewer: And it would be making some sounds, I guess.

Respondent 1: Yeah. I don't – I think most people had their chickens killed.

Interviewer: I would think so. Yeah.

Respondent 1: At the store. Yeah.

Respondent 2: No, some people didn't.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Then they had to do the whole job. I mean they had to do the killing and all that.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Right. But they...

- Interviewer:** That's a change. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** It's probably cheaper though.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm. Yeah, you probably paid to have your...
- Interviewer:** Okay. That's a [0:48:00] cost I won't [laughs] – I don't object to.
- Respondent 2:** Right.
- Interviewer:** What other changes have you seen in the Market? Because although it's south of our neighbourhood, it's been used a lot by our neighbourhood.
- Respondent 2:** Well it's become a bit more gentrified too. Like Oxford Fruits certainly put up their prices and see themselves as a sophisticated operation. I think before it was – there was, again, more variety of stores. [0:48:30] Now there's quite a lot of second-hand stores, clothing stores. There were always some of those, but run by different people. Now they're more bungalow, east and west, for instance. They're run by, you know, young entrepreneurial types, whereas before, the vintage clothes stores were just, you know, that. They were, you know, run by – actually there's a little – another store, two stores along College that they're run by a couple. He [0:49:00] tells me his daughter's in social work. And we often wonder how they exist because she owned – the wife owns one and it's a clothing store, and you never see anyone going in or out. And she's always just standing in the step.
- Respondent 1:** Mm.
- Respondent 2:** And he has the variety store next door.
- Respondent 1:** It's more grocery.
- Respondent 2:** Grocery. Yeah. That's right. There's no paper products or anything, but he – you know, you go in and buy something, but it's not a going [0:49:30] concern either, you feel.

- Interviewer:** And they've been there for a very long time? Or?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. All the time.
- Respondent 2:** A long, long time.
- Respondent 1:** And the kids – I mean, their kids...
- Respondent 2:** He says the kids are all at university, one's in social work. [Laughter] And...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But you never see anybody. You just see this couple, and they're usually outside and chatting, and...
- Interviewer:** So they own the building and they pay taxes, but they're not making any money.
- Respondent 1:** Whatever.
- Respondent 2:** I don't think so.
- Respondent 1:** I don't know. Maybe they make money from renting parts of the building because they actually own two buildings.
- Respondent 2:** **[0:50:00]** The other building that's been there a long time is Stephanian's.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I interviewed...
- Respondent 1:** Eleanor's interviewed her daughter.
- Interviewer:** I interviewed with a daughter, but I interviewed the woman. And after her husband died, it wasn't a pharmacy anymore, but she has a few old relics from the pharmacy.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.

- Interviewer:** And I think the sign says, "Open when it's open." [Laughs]
Something like that.
- Respondent 2:** I think it's open one day or two days, and then the rest of the time
it's just whenever.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But she likes to have a place to go. She said, "I don't like staying
home. It's too lonely."
- Respondent 2:** So her daughter is [0:50:30] obviously supporting her.
- Interviewer:** Her daughter lives upstairs.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Do you use Shoppers Drugmart at Bathurst on the south side of
College, just west of Bathurst?
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent 1:** No. Because I found out something very interesting about
Shoppers Drugmart, but if you don't use it, then you won't be so –
you won't know the people I'm talking about.
- Interviewer:** I don't use it, but I know the first – Koffler's opened their store on
College somewhere here.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** A small pharmacy.
- Respondent 1:** Right. Right.
- Interviewer:** On College near – [0:51:00] whichever direction College is in.

- Respondent 2:** Right. Right.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** I can't remember anything. I can't remember what was there before they knocked down – when they built Kensington School. Like what was...
- Respondent 1:** Well Kensington School was being built when we moved in, I think.
- Respondent 2:** Was it?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** The other thing that happened in terms of the neighbourhood was the fire station burning down.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** When was that?
- Respondent 1:** 28th of May, 1973.
- Respondent 2:** And that was – we were having a party here. Celia was there, and we heard these fire engines, and we went out...
- Respondent 1:** I have [0:51:30] photos of it.
- Respondent 2:** It was fascinating because they had just closed the fire station and they were – you know, it had this old bell tower that was unique, but they closed the station down and they were going to just not have the station there. And then there was this big fire, and so then not only did they reopen the station, but they – it was a huge fire. They had to send for a new clock to replace the original one that came from England at vast expense.
- Respondent 1:** Because the [0:52:00] – because of the fire, there was enough insurance money. So the city – it needed to be fixed. It had been

closed down because it was dangerous, and then there was a fire. And I spread a rumour that it was one of the...

Respondent 2: Oh, don't put that on the tape. [Laughter]

Respondent 1: Better not put that on the tape. [Laughs]

Interviewer: But I do remember there was a joke. Some people [0:52:30] – old people in Florida, and one had a fire, and the other one had a flood, and the other one said, "How do you start a flood?" [Laughter]

Respondent 1: Right. Anyway, the insurance money paid for the rebuilding.

Interviewer: So they might have had a fire – you know, that fire hall.

Respondent 1: Then it became a fire hall again. There was a period of maybe as much as ten years when it wasn't a fire hall, but – and...

Interviewer: So that was [0:53:00] fortuitous. [Laughs]

Respondent 2: Seemed to be fortuitous.

Interviewer: But the clock is often wrong.

Respondent 1: The clock has always been – actually, it's better now.

Respondent 2: It's better than it used to be.

Respondent 1: It used to be. [Laughs]

Respondent 2: Yeah. It was often just stopped.

Interviewer: Oh. I remember sometimes at fifteen past the hour it would...

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: It has never been good, but I think it's actually...

Interviewer: Somebody's paying attention.

Respondent 1: Somebody is...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: ...whatever. Doing it. Yeah. The **[0:53:30]** – the traffic on College, Rosalind has already mentioned that, has certainly gotten more evidently congested, but whether that was because of the lane changes of the Residents' Association introduced. See, it's gotten heavier in the last probably ten years, fifteen years.

Interviewer: **[0:54:00]** Well I know that there have been some articles recently about the traffic in Toronto being so heavy.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Sometimes it can be lined up on a Friday night and it's sort of from Bathurst to Spadina. I mean Spadina to Bathurst. It's just clogged.

Interviewer: And because I live closer to Harbord, I see a lot of traffic. Slow traffic. And rush hour, when people are going home...

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...the traffic going west can be lined up.

Respondent 1: It is only a rush hour phenomenon though. Normally there's not **[0:54:30]** a big problem at all. Yeah. Unless it's construction or something like that.

Interviewer: The Spadina Expressway, were you part of that? Or was that before you moved here?

Respondent 1: Well that was before we moved to this house, but we were – during the whole campaign, which was kind of ongoing when we arrived in Toronto, and so we weren't really involved in it, but we were certainly aware of it. **[0:55:00]** But by the time we got here, it was essentially resolved.

Interviewer: Oh. Imagine what that would have done to this neighbourhood.

Respondent 2: I know. I know.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, I think that we've pretty well covered...

Respondent 1: Excellent.

Interviewer: I want to ask you just one other thing, and that is about the safety of the neighbourhood. What was it like in the early '70s, and what is it like as you see it now, and feel?

Respondent 2: Well I always felt it was incredibly safe. I have no problem coming [0:55:30] home late at night or anything. Now, I sometimes – if I go to, say, use the bank machine on a Saturday morning, you know, there's people coming out who have been – you know, young people who have had an all-night or at the Silver Dollar, or all around, you know, on Spadina and College, just north of the bank, and there, you know, I think they're fairly drugged up or juiced up on something, and so I sometimes don't like using [0:56:00] the cash machine if they're around. And occasionally, there's – you know, I've actually thought of this about our – you know, our grandkids more – just, you know, there's some – not the people in the group home that's north of here, because I think they're really, you know, kind of contained and looked after.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 2: But there's [0:56:30] some times at night, I mean there's a new place that's opened called The Cage that's obviously...

Interviewer: On College.

Respondent 2: On College, that's a bit unsavoury, and there's JunJun's...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 2: ...and not that they're – they keep trying to make that place work, but thank goodness they're never able to do it. So sometimes it's like – but I think that's probably true of all over the city. I think it's not just here. I think there's – you know, the city's getting bigger [0:57:00] and I feel a bit more anonymous here, whereas before

when the kids were small, I knew a lot of people in the neighbourhood, whereas now, you know, because of going to work full-time and just going home, I don't know the neighbours nearly as well as Richard does.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent 1: I think – I mean we've been here forty-plus years and have really had very few incidents in terms of things [0:57:30] happening to this house. There was one time when we were reconstructing our backyard, and the whole of our backyard was open, and some kids came into the house and took some jewellery and so on. And that was partly our fault because the house was not in a very secure condition for a back entry. The – we had one bike stolen from the porch. We had one bike stolen from [0:58:00] the backyard. And that's about it. We don't lock our door – the front door during the day. We do lock it at night, and we lock it if we're out, but if we're in, we don't lock the door. We know there was a break-in a couple of years ago in one of the windows on our neighbour's house there, but I mean they broke the window, but they didn't get in. [0:58:30] And it was this one, that one there. But really, I mean, when you hear about other cities, when you hear about – and not only in the United States or even in Canada, but in Britain, this is pretty safe. The – when our kids were young, we felt [0:59:00] okay about them being out, as we said, in the lane.

Respondent 2: They went on the TTC by themselves.

Respondent 1: We felt okay about using transit. Our daughter, now in her forties, would use the TTC when she was eight years old by herself, and...

Interviewer: Parents are much more cautious now, I think.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: And we were generally okay with that. They, you know – I mean, I think that kind of thing helps kids be [0:59:30] responsible.

- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** You know?
- Interviewer:** So – but the kind of thing you're describing is kind of random, but it's not that you feel the neighbourhood has become...
- Respondent 2:** Oh no.
- Interviewer:** Start locking everything.
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Respondent 2:** No, no. Not at all.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Respondent 2:** And I think it's a personal thing. I think when I knew the people better, I think that creates a sense of safety, and I've got a bit to kind of...
- Interviewer:** Well I think when our children are playing with the other children and we're watching, or calling them in for lunch or dinner, you're more aware of who's around.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And we do know the neighbours, [1:00:00] but through our children.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. We don't know the neighbours as well. I mean, even though, as Rosalind said, I'm a bit more involved, I don't know the neighbours as well as we used to. I mean I know – I know roughly who lives in the houses around here, but I don't know any of them particularly well. I mean, I know several of them, but...

- Respondent 2:** We know you know. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, but I mean, [1:00:30] Inga, for example, we know, but we don't know her really very well.
- Respondent 2:** I know her really well.
- Respondent 1:** You know her really well.
- Respondent 2:** I talked with her for years.
- Respondent 1:** And the Wards.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well, I do want to say – before I say thank you to both of you, I don't know if you're going to like this, Richard, but I want to thank you very much for writing the grant, for writing the application that got us the grant to be moving ahead because we will be showing our work at the JCC November, December...
- Respondent 2:** Wow.
- Interviewer:** ...and then we'll have some [1:01:00] other shows.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And that was your very hard work. So I want to thank you for that, Richard. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** You thanked me before. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** I know. And I want to thank both of you. Rosalind, it's a pleasure to meet you.
- Respondent 2:** Yes, it's very nice to meet you.

Interviewer: And although you thought there might not be too much to talk about, we could continue if we wanted to.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So thank you.

Respondent 1: Well that's your skill as an interviewer. This is the other Eleanor.

Respondent 2: This is social worker Eleanor. [Laughter] No, that's interesting you know Barbara, and that's because you were part of the U of T's...

Interviewer: Yeah. Well I met Barbara [1:01:30] only because we're supervising students. That's how I met her.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Mm-hm.

Interviewer: But I was told that I have to – this is Rosalind and Richard Gilbert, and I want to say thank you both [laughter] very much. Thanks a lot.

Respondent 1: Thank you.

[1:01:41]

[End of recording]